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a number of years, according to law he acquires semi-proprietary rights over them. The landlord does not want this to happen, and so with a view to safeguarding his own interests he leases out his land to different persons in different years. A short-term lease is naturally not conducive to land improvement, for the person cultivating the land does not risk any investment in it. If he does improve it, in one of the following years the landlord may lease it out to someone else who offers to pay more than the person who improved the land. Secondly, those who hold most of the agricultural land in the village are interested in maintaining a supply of cheap agricultural labour, without which it would be impossible for them to cultivate their extensive fields. They benefit more by cultivating their land with the help of this labour, than by leasing out their land. If they leased out all their surplus land the cheap labour supply would appreciably diminish, and for want of competition wages of those who were still available would rise. To avoid this they choose to leave some of their land uncultivated, and thus we have the paradox of having in the same village many land-hungry families and several hundred acres of uncultivated land.

The land belongs to the family, and normally the head of the family exercises control over it. On the death of the father, the land and other agricultural property—such as tools, implements and livestock—are distributed equally among the brothers. Provision is made for the marriage of unmarried daughters as well as for the maintenance of the minor sons of the deceased. In very special cases, with the consent of all the brothers, a widowed sister is also given a small share. But this is a gratuity rather than a rightful share.

The agriculturists have considerable sentiment for their land and cattle. If adversity compels them to sell some of their fields or cattle, the day when this is done becomes a day of semi-mourning for the household. The hour of transfer is indeed a sad one, and the farmer will complete the necessary formalities with a heavy heart. For several days the family atmosphere remains overcast with gloom. The womenfolk may even wail and shed tears of real grief. In the sentiments of an Indian peasant, the Earth occupies a mother's position and parting with a fragment of it is nearly tantamount to separation from the mother. It is surprising how cattle become almost members of the agriculturist's family, and how